

really. My mom and dog and I are hiding in the subway in Ukraine.

So Tony decided he had to go to Ukraine himself personally and help. Two other starter chefs from Chicago, Giuseppe Tentori and Paul Kahan, decided to join him.

When one of Tony's regular customers heard that the chefs were paying for the trip to Poland and Ukraine out of their own pockets, he said: I have 5 million frequent flier miles. I will buy your tickets.

They volunteered for a week last April, cooking from early morning to late at night, feeding hot meals to as many as 30,000 people a day at a Polish refugee camp just six miles from the border.

Helping others was not new to Tony. He is known for his support of charities, including Meals on Wheels Chicago, St. Jude's Hospital, and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

But what Tony saw in that refugee camp near the Polish-Ukrainian border broke his heart: an elderly couple who appeared to have left everything they owned behind, now dependent on the kindness of strangers for even a simple glass of water or a meal; terrified women and children who had been forced to flee their homes, carrying only what they could fit into suitcases and shopping bags.

"Often," Tony said, "I had to look away to hide the tears." For his humanitarian work to aid Ukrainians displaced by war and his many other charitable endeavors, Chef Priolo was recently honored by Chicago magazine as a "Chicagoan of the Year," a well-deserved tribute.

Around the same time that Chef Priolo was watching the horrors unfold last year, Senator CHRIS COONS of Delaware and I sat in a dark, nearly empty departure lounge in Vilnius, Lithuania early one morning.

We were there to express support for Lithuania, that small NATO member on the front line of democracy, who has a long history of Russian tyranny.

And then while we sat, the unthinkable occurred in modern Europe. News broke that Russian dictator Vladimir Putin had launched a massive military invasion of Ukraine. It was an ill-fated throwback to an era when aggressor nations tried to seize their neighbor's territory by force, all in the blind pursuit of some warped Soviet nostalgia trip.

Putin was willing to sacrifice the lives of thousands of Ukrainians and even Russians, the reputation of his country, and the international order established after the horror of World War II.

Perhaps having listened to too many years of his own country's brainwashing propaganda, Putin also thought Ukraine would fall into his lap in a matter of days or hours. He thought the transatlantic alliance in the community of democracies was a thing of the past and wouldn't dare to respond. Well, he was wrong on every single front.

The Ukrainian people repelled Putin's invasion. They heroically clawed back seized territory. They withstood brutal, deliberate attacks on civilian targets and critical infrastructure—war crimes by any standard of human conduct.

They are united in their resistance to Russia and their desire to be free to choose their own path in the future. The United States and its allies around the world have stood together in support of Ukraine and against Russia, and NATO is on the cusp of adding two new formidable members—Finland and Sweden.

President Biden deserves great praise for leading this global effort, and praise too to the American people for recognizing a courageous effort against tyranny and standing on the right side of history.

But we should not lose sight of the crimes committed by Putin in the war, crimes for which he and his enablers must and will be held accountable. Entire villages have been destroyed. From Bucha to Izyum to Kherson, there is evidence of horrific mass killing, torture, and sexual violence against innocent people.

Dead and mutilated bodies litter the street. Babies have been found in mass graves. Thousands have been abducted. These are the acts of a war criminal.

That is why Congress recently strengthened our Nation's tools for cooperation with the International Criminal Court when it comes to Ukraine and why we recently enacted a bill I introduced entitled Justice for Victims of War Crimes. And it is why Congress provided \$45 billion in aid to Ukraine in the most recent spending bill, a measure, thank goodness, with broad bipartisan support.

Just like the Nuremberg trials after World War II, and, more recently, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the world will hold Putin and the Russians accountable for unleashing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine.

As President Biden said in his State of the Union Address, the fight against tyranny in Ukraine is "a test for the ages. A test for America. [And] a test for the world." We cannot fail.

I agree with the President. We must continue to stand loyally by Ukraine.

I will close with a memory I will never forget. It was the year 2014—9 years ago. I was walking through Kyiv's Maidan Square with my friend, the late Senator John McCain. It was a trip we made to the area, and he was a celebrity. John McCain stood by their side when others wouldn't, and they loved him for it.

And we started to walk into Maidan Square together. All around us were makeshift shrines dedicated to the victims killed during peaceful protests simply asking for the opportunity to have a democracy. It was evident then and reflective of what we have seen during the last year in Ukraine, the unshakable determination of the

Ukrainian people to be free, to be able to democratically choose their own future, just as we do in the United States.

Senator McCain understood it, and I stood by his side. It is long overdue that President Putin understands it as well. Until then, we will stand together with the Ukrainian people in that journey toward democracy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO R.C. ROBERTS

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, thank you for that enthusiastic introduction.

I am here. Once again, it is the end of the week. At least in the Senate, it is the end of the week, not for the rest of America. But when we end up here with our work, on Thursday afternoon, I usually try and do a story about what I refer to as "The Alaskan of the Week."

Hopefully, everybody can see this photo. We have included our Alaskans of the Week's pictures here. This is a really good one, if you are watching anywhere in Alaska, I hope, and across America.

Now, the reporters usually like this speech because it signals the end of their week. Normally, we have a crowd of press in the Gallery, maybe not so much today.

But it is about somebody who has done something good for their community or the State or maybe for their country. This Alaskan of the Week is actually someone who did something for the world—the world. Saved the world. Stay tuned. No exaggeration.

Now, I always like to give an update on what is happening back home. We are getting covered in snow—tons and tons of snow. The Sun is starting to come back. It is a very cold and snowy winter. The Iditarod is right around the corner—the last great race. Senator MURKOWSKI and I will talk about that soon. It is a beautiful time of year if you love the outdoors—skiing, snow-machining.

So come visit Alaska. That is what I always do—make the pitch.

And people don't know this, but Alaska is also an incredibly diverse State. In fact, Anchorage, my hometown, the State's largest city, is home to the country's three most diverse census tracks—racially, in terms of nationalities. By the way, the fourth most diverse is Queens, NY. So more diverse than Queens, NY, in terms of race, ethnicities, and nationalities. We are very proud of our diversity. More than 100 languages are spoken in our schools—Native languages, other languages, foreign languages. We are diverse.

We are very patriotic. In fact, Alaska is home to more veterans per capita than any State in the country. White, Black, Asian American, Alaska Native, all different races make up that key part of Alaska's heritage, military service.

By the way, if you are watching the news, you know there is a lot going on over Alaska right now. But I just want to say a word about our military, Active-Duty, National Guard, and Reserve Forces. Think about what our guys and women have done the last 2 weeks: tracked and intercepted this big Russian spy balloon, tracked and intercepted at least two of these smaller unidentified objects and shot two of them down—the one over Alaska. The one in Canada, those were shot down by Alaskan forces in Canada. Then, in the last 4 nights, these same forces have gone and intercepted two different Russian “Bear” bombers and fighters—Russian fighters who were trying to get into our airspace. This is in 2 weeks. These are not easy missions. They are very difficult, challenging, missions.

Do you know what else wasn’t an easy mission? Storming the beaches of Normandy. Storming the beaches of Normandy.

I have a little picture here. That is why I want to get to our Alaskan of the Week, a very special, very patriotic Alaskan, a World War II veteran, Mr. R.C. Roberts.

I can think of no better way to cap off Black History Month than to recognize Mr. Roberts, his service to our country, and help him and his family celebrate his 100th birthday.

How about a round of applause, America, for Mr. Roberts’ 100th birthday, a Normandy, D-Day, Omaha Beach veteran. He celebrated that on Tuesday, Valentine’s Day, 100 years old.

So who is Mr. Roberts?

Let’s hear a little bit about the life that he has lived in full. Like I said, that is him. That is him, our Alaskan of the Week, on the poster board. He was a handsome young man, saving the world, literally.

He was originally born in Garrison, TX, in 1923. Imagine that, 100 years ago. According to letters written by friends, he worked on a family farm, left school early in life, and joined the Army when he was just 18, shortly at the start of World War II. He wanted to go fight for his country, and he did fight.

Many Americans have seen movies about D-Day. Again, here is a photo—our brave soldiers, hitting the beaches at Normandy, facing unbelievable heavy fire, having to navigate mined obstacles on the beach, mines on the bluffs, Germans dug in with machine-guns.

You have seen in the beginning—I am sure many of you have—“Saving Private Ryan,” the seawalls to climb. That is what he did. That is what he did for America, for freedom. It was the largest, most complex combined airborne-amphibious military invasion in world history. Mr. Roberts, our Alaskan of the Week, was there on Omaha Beach in 1944.

He eventually marched all the way into Germany with the U.S. Army, all the way across Europe. He was part of the heroic mission that saved the world. That is not an exaggeration.

Mr. Roberts served 3 years. He was awarded the European Campaign Medal with three Bronze Stars, representing three difficult battles across Europe that he fought in. And here is the thing, you have to remember this. It was 1944. Our military was fully segregated, and Black soldiers were discriminated against. In fact, it took until 1948 for President Harry Truman to order the Armed Forces to be integrated, 16 years before the passage of the Civil Rights Act. But this patriot, despite the discrimination, was fighting for America.

How did Mr. Roberts make it through these ordeals—incredible ordeals—of fire?

Prayer, he said. He said:

Every day, I prayed, and [when I got home] I was so grateful to be back in the United States.

When he got out of the military and made his way back to Texas and then to California, he had a friend who was in Alaska who told him that his skills were needed up in the great State of Alaska.

It was 1964. Our State had just been devastated by the largest earthquake ever recorded in North America. It was the second-largest earthquake ever recorded in the history of the world—9.2 on the Richter scale—our Good Friday earthquake in 1964. Tsunamis crushed buildings, and of course it killed a lot of people. There was a lot of rebuilding being done. So Mr. Roberts, who at this point was a cement mason, made his way north—north to Alaska, north to the future.

He worked all across the State helping rebuild it: Fairbanks, Kenai, Valdez, the Aleutian Islands Chain. He literally helped lay pavement for the construction of what is now Ted Stevens International Airport in Anchorage.

He bought a house in Chugiak, AK, outside of Anchorage. He met and married the love of his life, Joan, in 1970, in Anchorage. They joined the Eagle River Missionary Baptist Church, where they remained, and he remains an active member at the tender age of 100. Together for more than 40 years, before Joan passed, they raised four generations of children and had a wonderful life together.

Like I said, Tuesday, Valentine’s Day, February 14, was Mr. Roberts’ 100th birthday. I had the honor of calling him, wishing him a happy birthday, talking to him a little bit about his heroic service, thanking him for his heroic service.

The day after his birthday, he caught up with his friend Darrell Little. Mr. Roberts and Mr. Little have been friends—best friends—for more than 40 years. Darrell was visiting Mr. Roberts, making him his favorite meal for his birthday, a beef tongue sandwich. Sounds pretty good.

Darrell described Mr. Roberts as a loyal citizen who served his country bravely with honor and distinction. That is what being Alaskan of the Week is all about.

Darrell asked Mr. Roberts what he wanted to say about his extraordinary life, and here is what Mr. Roberts said just 2 days ago. He loves Alaska. He wouldn’t trade his time in the State for anything else in the world, even with all the snow we are having this winter. He also said it was such a great honor to serve his country, and he thanked God for blessing him.

He sounds like an amazing guy. He is an amazing guy. I just spoke to him.

Mr. Roberts, thank you for your service. Thank you for helping rebuild Alaska. Thank you for living and leading such an exemplary life for 100 years. Thank you, as we move into Black History Month, for showing an example of a young man, patriotic, despite systemic discrimination against him, who fought the evil Nazi regime heroically and valiantly, part of the “greatest generation” that literally saved the world.

So, Mr. Roberts, happy birthday. I know you are also happy about one of the most prestigious awards you can ever get, Alaskan of the Week. We wish you well, sir.

WILLOW PROJECT

Mr. President, you have seen this speech a couple times, and I am going to keep talking about it. Senator MURKOWSKI is going to keep talking about it. Congresswoman PELTOLA, over on the House side, is going to keep talking about it.

This is the bipartisan priority we have for Alaska and America. It is called the Willow Project. The Willow Project. People across Alaska are speaking, unified in one voice, about the importance of this very big, very environmentally safe energy project in our State. Republicans, Democrats, and Independents in our State legislature, I believe, are getting ready to pass a resolution to the Biden White House and the Biden Department of the Interior, saying: Finally, make this happen.

What is this? It is a very large project, a \$9 billion investment, with 2,500 construction jobs, 75 percent of which will be the building trades, unions; peak production of 200,000 barrels a day into the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, not much infrastructure needed; highest environmental standards in the world and lowest greenhouse gas emissions of any major project this size. It has enormous support from unions, building trades, Alaska Natives.

I have been on the floor talking about this a lot. Last week, we were frustrated. I made the point that our friends in the national media never talk about who actually really supports the project. They quote lower-48 radical environmental groups—who don’t live in Alaska, by the way—who are all opposed, we know that. They don’t want anything built in America. Heck, you can’t build a bridge here without groups like this opposing it.

But what I said is listen to the Native people, listen to the indigenous people of Alaska. They want this. I